in the process of decision making by entrepreneurs who wish to set up such projects.

I.A. Services

6253. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to improve the services of Indian Airlines and Air India;

(b) whether these Airlines are having parity in air fare with other private Airlines; and

(c) if not, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) Air India and Indian Airlines are taking steps to improve their product, image and on time performance.

(b) and (c) Airlines are free to fix the fares on domestic sectors in their own commercial judgement keeping in view the increases in input costs and the impact on traffic. As regards international fares, the increases are initially discussed and agreed to by the airlines at the Tariff Co-ordinating Conference of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and implemented with the approval of the respective Governments. Such review of international fares is undertaken by IATA for different sectors from time to time.

Air Crafts Owned by Air India

6254. SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of air craft used for carrying passengers by Air India at present;

(b) the actual requirement of air craft;

(c) whether Government have any plan to purchase air craft from other countries; and

(d) if so, the number and details thereof and the amount involved therein?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) Air India has, at present, 28 aircraft in its fleet.

(b) to (d) Requirement of aircraft and expansion/ renewal of fleet by Air India depends on the resources of the airlines, traffic requirements, suitability of the aircraft type, viability of operations on various sectors/routes etc.

Conversion of Manual Exchanges in Gujarat

6255. SHRI VIJAY PATEL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to convert the existing Manual Telephone Exchanges in Gujarat into electronic exchanges;

(b) if so, the details thereof district-wise?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) No manual Telephone Exchange is in existence in Gujarat.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Upgradation of BPO Vaishkanti Allahabad

6256. DR. AMRIT LAL BHARTI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that Vaishkanti Village of Chail Parliamentary Constituency in district Allahabad has been declared Ambedkar village has been increasing regularly;

(b) whether the condition of branch post office of the village is same as it was in old times and several Members of Parliament have requested to upgrade this branch post office to sub-post office;

(c) whether the Government have taken any concrete steps to upgrade this branch post office to sub-post office and for its development;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) The Department has no information that the village Vaishkanti has been declared as Ambedkar village. The population of the village has been increasing regularly as in case of other villages.

(b) to (e) The extra Departmental Branch Post Office was opened on 12th October, 1971 and continues to be an Extra Departmental Branch Post Office till date. The proposal to upgrade this Branch Post Office into a Departmental Sub Post Office was examined repeatedly at different times but the same was not found justified on the basis of work load and income and cost.

Crisis in Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited

6257. SHRI HARADHAN ROY: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:-

(a) whether the Union Government has received any representation in respect of the crisis being faced by the workers of mineral Exploration Corporation Limited;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken in this respect ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) The Government have received representations from various sources against closure of area offices, sale of land and buildings in various places, transfer of personnel etc. It has been decided to maintain status quo in this regard for the present.

[Translation]

Bailadila Mines

6258. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state: